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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AN ADDRESS,
DELIVERED
BEFORE THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
OF
NASSAU-HALL,
ON THE DAY OF THE
ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT
OF THE COLLEGE,
SEPTEMBER 25, 1833.

BY JOHN SERGEANT, LL. D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PRINCETON:

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TO THE HON. JOHN SERGEANT:

Sir,—The undersigned, Members of the Alumni Association of the College of New Jersey, having been appointed for the purpose, feel great pleasure in tending to you the thanks of said Association, for the very appropriate and impressive Address, which you delivered before them this afternoon; and we do hereby, agreeably to our instructions, request a copy of the same for publication.

(Signed) W. NEILL,
J. D. FYLER,
JOHN MACLEAN.

PRINCETON, Sept. 25, 1833.

PRINCETON, Sept. 26, 1833.

Gentlemen,—In compliance with the request in your note of yesterday, I have the pleasure now of sending you a copy of the Address delivered before the Alumni Association.

Be pleased to make known to that body my sense of their kindness, in estimating my effort to fulfil their wishes, and to accept for the Association, and for yourselves, the assurance of the affectionate and respectful regard, of, gentlemen,

Yours, very truly,

JOHN SERGEANT.

REV. W. NEILL, D. D.

REV. J. D. FYLER,

REV. PROFESSOR MACLEAN.



AN ADDRESS.

BRETHREN OF THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION—

THE venerable Institution which this day receives the renewed expression of our affectionate duty and respect, is associated in our recollection with an interesting period in our lives. From the calm shade of the College, where he has been sheltered and nourished, the student goes forth into the world, and finds himself in a great measure left to his own guidance. The first moment is one of enjoyment. Freed from the restraints of discipline, his existence seems to be concentrated in the single sensation that now, he is his own master. This is the point to which his thoughts, his hopes and his wishes, have been long directed with eager anxiety—he has reached the horizon that has hitherto bounded his little world, leaving all beyond to be filled up with the creations of his youthful fancy. Very soon, however, if he be capable of considerate reflection, he perceives that he has only taken a new departure, and that the stage which is before him requires a still more vigorous exertion of manly resolution and manly strength. Nor does it admit of a pause. While he is yet taking an affectionate leave of the guardians and instructors of his youth, and bidding adieu to the companions of his studies and amusements, even then, when the feeling

of gaiety is checked by the unavoidably painful consciousness, that the relations which are thus terminated can never be restored; in the midst of the tumult which agitates him with unusual emotion, he must look through the tear which lingers on his eye, to the world that is opening upon his view, and apply his hand, warm from the parting embrace, to the work that is before him, cold as it may seem to be.

Such a transition forms an epoch in the life of man. It is an epoch full of the deepest interest. And how can it be otherwise? If the education of youth be of that momentous importance, which mankind have always agreed that it is, its closing scene, the moment when the work is pronounced to be ended, whether its purpose has been accomplished or not, the last affectionate lesson, conveyed in the benediction and charge—the heartfelt invocation of Heaven’s guidance and protection for those who are going forth—the solemn and the earnest effort to send with them a deep and final impression of the paternal spirit which has watched over and nurtured them in the days of their pupillage—the anxious solicitude that is in every way manifested for their future welfare—all these are so many affecting admonitions that one great opportunity has gone by, never to return.

To this point in our existance the memory will often recur in after years. How many recollections will be associated with it! How many inquiries will be suggested by it! Our venerable Alma Mater, does she continue to enjoy undiminished health and strength, and to spread before her children, with affectionate kindness, the daily provision of wholesome nourishment? The ministers of her dispensations, those who devoted themselves to our service with untiring

diligence, where are they? The companions of our youth, how has it fared with them? And when, as upon an occasion like this, we come within the walls where our early days were passed, and find ourselves after years of absence, again associated with the objects of our acquaintance in times that are long gone by, as well as with a portion of the remnant of that living assemblage which gave them animation and interest, it is then that the fading picture is restored, mellowed by time, but disclosing to us affecting realities, which had escaped our attention while we were ourselves a part of the moving groupe? It is then that the question will recur—why were we here? But this question is immediately superceded by another, bringing it to the test of experience—what permanent advantage has any one derived from having been here? What influence has education had upon his after life? Has it made him wiser and happier, a better citizen, a more useful member of society?

As often as questions like these recur, (and to thoughtful minds they will recur very often,) the first reflection they produce will be, that every advantage in life is attended with correspondent obligation. In proportion to the talent committed to us is the claim for its improvement. If from our earliest infancy we have been watched over with parental solicitude; if unceasing pains have been devoted to aid the developement of our faculties; if, as we advanced and the first nourishment of children became too weak for our increasing strength, the labors of learned and pious men have been engaged to carry on the good work of moral and intellectual discipline; if in mercy we have been permitted to arrive at the age of comparative maturity, unstricken by disease or

infirmity, and to enter upon the duties of life with faculties unclouded and health unimpaired; if, in a word, we are committed to ourselves in the enjoyment of the blessings of a reasonable measure of bodily strength, and with the benefit of all the advantages to be derived from the unwearied application of experienced wisdom to our improvement, we must be wanting in duty to ourselves, unmindful of what we owe to others, and ungrateful for the bounty of Heaven, if we do not rightly appreciate and adequately secure the rich patrimony which has been thus provided for us.

In this process of examination, the first point in order, and not the least in magnitude, will be that interesting epoch already mentioned. The day of leaving College will be ever present to the memory, in a review of life, and will be regarded with pleasure or with pain, exactly as a conscientious judgment may be able to pronounce that it has been reached with honor, and its good fruits gathered as they ought to be.

But let us not be misunderstood. It would neither be just, nor rational to conclude, that individual merit in this respect is to be precisely and finally graduated according to the comparative eminence that may be attained; still less that all are to be considered as having failed, who have not attained the very highest distinction in College. Slight shades of difference in intellectual energy, a less advanced state of the faculties, accidental disturbance in study, temporary loss of health, many things not depending upon himself, may cause a student's name to be associated with a number below the first. It happens, too, and deserves to be especially remarked, for the consideration of parents, and of all who are charged with the care of the instruction of youth, that a failure in the

competition for the highest honors of the College, is owing sometimes to defect in preparatory education. If *that* has been defective and insufficient, there is a want of strength for the trials of the collegiate course, which can only be supplied by uncommon abilities or extraordinary application. Very often, however, this sense of comparative weakness developed in the exercises of the College, becomes a discouragement to exertion, and the young aspirant yielding to what seems to be an invincible obstacle in the path of a just ambition, abandons himself to indolent despair, and sinks below the level he might really have attained without any very undue effort. Of the permanent ill effects of such despondency, which every day becomes deeper, as its consequences are more and more felt, until it settles into a permanent feeling of self-abasement ;—of the probability or even the possibility, that it may enfeeble the character for life, disappointing and destroying the hopes of friends, and turning to naught the time, the labor and the expense bestowed for his improvement, it is needless to speak. Let us hope that they seldom occur, at least to the whole extent that has been suggested. That they *may* occur, in any degree, even though it be far short of the measure of calamity, supposed to be possible, is one among many arguments, that might be urged to enforce the duty of parents and guardians who are entrusted with the care of children. They cannot be too often, nor too anxiously reminded, that upon this point the responsibility is theirs. The examinations for admission into College will, to be sure, exclude the cases of plain deficiency—though not even then, without encountering resistance and complaint ;—but that fulness of preparation, which will give confidence and

strength, and enable the student to apply himself to his task, with all the power at command which ought to be brought to it, depends upon years of previous careful instruction and discipline—nay, it depends upon every moment of those years, and hence the indispensable necessity there is, and the high obligation resulting from it, that every moment shall have been well employed, under the direction of able and conscientious teachers.

It is a mistake to suppose that this portion of education may be committed to feeble and incompetent hands—that it may be negligently conducted without much injury—and that all its omissions and defects are to be made up and supplied during the few years that are passed in College. This is what a College does not profess to do. It is what a College cannot do. Its professors, however learned, cannot bring back the time that has gone by, nor cause the work to be done, which that time was allotted for performing. If it were allowable at present to dwell longer upon this subject, it might be added with unquestionable truth, that the examinations for admission into College ought to be considered as the disinterested judgment of enlightened and competent men upon the progress that has been made.—There can be no motive for unreasonable strictness. The bias, if any there be, must be on the other side. There is great danger, indeed, that the motives for undue laxity will be too much increased, since institutions professing to teach the higher branches have become so multiplied in our country; some of them struggling for a precarious existence, with the fear of poverty always before their eyes. But if in the faithful discharge of their duty, as examiners for admission into

College, professors are obliged to make known to parents, that their children are not qualified, however unwelcome such a communication may be, parents, if considerate, will receive it, as information given to them, for their own benefit, and instead of complaining, or seeking to evade its effects, by appealing to a more liberal tribunal, or a more indulgent interpretation, will profit by it, for the benefit of their offspring, by sending them to places of instruction, where their defects can be supplied. A little more time may qualify them to enjoy the advantages of College. What will they be profited by entering College, if they be not so qualified? At best, they can reap but a barren honor. And this is not all. If when their course is finished, they are found to be deficient in the proper requirements belonging to a collegiate education, they are degraded in the estimation of others, as wanting in capacity or industry to profit by the opportunity they have enjoyed. What seemed to be an advantage, thus becomes in effect, a most serious injury.—The whole matter may be thus summed up. The work is in fact but one. The preparatory education is the ground-work. The collegiate education, is the structure raised upon it. If the former be wanting, the latter has nothing to rest upon. If the one be defective or unsound, the other will be imperfect and insecure. Should it become necessary in any given case to decide which of these shall be dispensed with, (both being unattainable,) there can be no hesitation whatever in making the decision. An attempt to build without a foundation is too obviously absurd to require to be insisted upon, and any scheme, however plausible, which professes to accomplish such an end, must inevitably originate in ignorance or imposture.

A College may perhaps be so organized as to do the work of a Grammar School, and then it ought to be considered as a Grammar School, and nothing more; but if it undertake to do the proper work of a College, without the aid of suitable preparatory instruction, it will graduate pupils who with their Bachelor's diploma in their hands, could not be received into the lowest form of a conscientious and well arranged institution, without a violation of its Statutes, and, (if it be not a contradiction to say so,) an egregious imposition upon their parents.

Long as this digression has already been, it is impossible to leave it, without an additional remark. After what has been said, very little reflection is necessary to enable any one to perceive, how important a place in the work of education is occupied by what have been denominated preparatory schools, by which of course are understood to be meant, those schools where pupils spend some of the years, which precede their being presented for admission into College. Yet, it is more than doubtful whether their value is justly appreciated; or those who labor in them as teachers, are in general estimated as they ought to be. The name may have some influence. They are denominated Schools, which at the same time that it places them in the relation of inferiority to Universities and Colleges, seems to confound them with the greater part of the class designated by the same term, and occupied only with the instruction of children. They are affected too by the fact, that their pupils, when received into them are really children, and a large portion must always be actually of that description. But while to those who take a careless or superficial view, it has thus the appearance of

a children's school, it will be found to embrace a portion of life when the developement of the faculties is more rapid, and the transition greater, than at any other period whatever. Compare a boy, for example, of ten years of age, entering upon a course of discipline like that we have been speaking of, with the youth of fourteen or fifteen who has passed through it. What a difference there is in his moral and intellectual power? How much may have been determined for his future character and habits? His success in College, as we have already seen, may depend upon it, and the character and the self-respect with which he enters upon the larger scene of life may be influenced materially by that success. Nor must it be forgotten that the entrance into College is the period when the first considerable change of discipline takes place. The pupil is no longer to be so much in the presence of his teacher, nor under his immediate personal inspection and control. He is to be left more to his own government, rendering an account of his conduct, at stated periods, by the ability he manifests to perform his tasks in the recitation room. For this change too, he is to be prepared. A most serious one it unquestionably must be, since it commits to him at once the direction of so large a portion of his own employment, and requires him to make the first serious essay, (which through all his life long, he will be obliged to repeat, if he mean to be a rational creature,) of his capacity to sacrifice present inclination, for the attainment of future advantage—to make his appetites and his passions yield to his sense of duty.

Enough it is hoped has been said to give some faint and imperfect notion of the nature of the charge which devolves

upon *him* who undertakes to conduct this portion of preparatory education. In proportion as it is arduous and important, ought the teacher who faithfully acquits himself of it, to be treated with respect and consideration—not for his own sake merely, and as due in justice to honest and valuable services of a very high order—but for the sake of society, for the sake of parents, for the support and advancement of the great interests of morality and learning. All are deeply concerned, and there is little hazard in asserting that the finishing department of education can never be what it ought to be, unless the department where so large a part of the substance and body of the work is prepared, be sustained at its proper elevation, by an adequate public estimate of its value, and a suitable regard for those who labor in it with diligence and effect. Let them be judged, not by ridiculous promises, which any one *may* know can never be fulfilled—not by assurances of short and easy methods—not by a vain display of trifling accomplishments, or precocious and ephemeral acquirement to captivate the ignorant;—but by the fair fruits of discipline and instruction, coming in season, gradually unfolding their beauty, and at length attaining their full size, and ripening according to the order of nature.

But to return after this protracted departure, to the point from which we set out. It is not necessary to enter at all into the question how far the judgment of a learned and impartial faculty, in estimating the capacity and merits of the students sent forth from the Institution, is invariably confirmed by the judgment of time;—whether the earnest given of comparative eminence in youth, is sure to be followed by distinction in riper years. In looking through

the annals of Nassau Hall, now embracing a period of almost ninety years, and resplendent with the virtues and honors of her children, one cannot help believing that the efforts of piety and learning, here applied with unremitting diligence, have been signally blessed and prospered. Into what field of usefulness in our country, into what scene of exertion where good was to be done, or right honor to be gained, shall we look, without finding *her* sons among the most distinguished? And of those who have thus been signalized, we shall find in general, that their youth was marked by the rewards of diligence and good conduct. There may be exceptions—doubtless there *are* some. But they are only exceptions, few in number, and bearing no proportion to the multitudes whose future life has been characterized by a continuance of the same habits which fixed their station here, bearing testimony of the most conclusive nature, to the just peception and fair decision of the authorities of the College, as well as to the enduring power of good discipline and instruction. Let no one then flatter himself, that he can redeem the time he has thrown away in his youth, or that he will be able to cast off the unhappy influence of the vicious propensities he has indulged at the expense of his reputation and standing in the place of his education. It may happen—undoubtedly it does happen—just often enough to entitle it to be ranked among the possibilities, which like the prizes in a lottery, that can fall but to the few, serve nevertheless to delude and mislead the many, often to their ruin. Every day has its appropriate work, sufficient to occupy it fully. A rational being can commit no greater error than to indulge himself in the indolent hope, that the day which is to come, will bring

with it more powerful incentives to virtuous resolution, than that which is present, or that besides its own proper duties, it will afford him time for the performance of those which have been previously neglected. And if it could, will the opportunity that has been neglected and lost, ever return? To come directly to the very point in question, can he who has wasted the precious time allotted for instruction in College, rejected the counsels and aid of its learned preceptors, when they were offered to him, and heedlessly and unprofitably outlived the age, and outgrown the stature of a pupil—can he promise himself that these advantages will ever return? No; if he will reflect, he will be obliged to confess, that it is almost impossible. He may perhaps repair, to some extent, the injury that has been done. But how will he accomplish it? By solitary labor, unaided, or irregularly aided—by means the best he can employ, but defective and insufficient, and not to be compared with those which in his folly he has thrown away—so that at last his achievement will be imperfect, and short of what it might have been. And if he succeed at all, what will it cost him? To say nothing of the shame and mortification and self-reproach, inseparably attendant upon the awakening sense of conscious inferiority—of the sighs of regret, and the pangs of repentance, for his irrational folly—of the perplexing and anxious doubts that *will* haunt him whether he will be able to redeem himself by any exertion he can make—to omit even to contrast the gloom which from all these causes will seem to surround him, with the cheerful light that would have played upon his footsteps if he had always walked in the path of duty—passing all this by, what, we repeat, has it cost him? A portion of time

which ought to have been devoted to other attainments, and might have been so devoted, is taken from its proper purpose, to make up former deficiencies. The fund for to-day is consumed in paying off the arrears of yesterday.—Life is too short to allow of such deductions. It is long enough, if properly employed, but it has not a moment to spare for repairing wanton waste.

Besides—the days of our life, though, like so many pieces of coin, they are all of equal value, are not, like this servant of commerce, equally applicable to every purpose. If they are numbered, so are they assuredly marked. From the first budding of the faculties through all their growth, there is an arrangement of them discernible, admirable in itself, and admirably adapted to the perfection of the whole. In the earlier stages of existence, eager curiosity is diligent in collecting, and the store-house of memory, unoccupied, and with all its avenues clear and unobstructed, is ready to receive and to retain what is deposited. As we advance, reason begins to act her part, at first feebly and with hesitation, but from day to day with increasing confidence, if not with increasing strength. Passion and appetite, also, become tumultuous and clamorous, requiring the continual exercise of our better nature to keep them in due subordination, and give to their impulse the right direction. The moral sense too, the sure guide within us, begins to be developed, the faithful witness and monitor, the immediate manifestation of Divine wisdom and goodness, without which all would be chaos and disorder. We arrive at length at the period when childhood has not ceased, and manhood has not begun, but when there is, as it were, a divided empire between them,

neither being ascendant, but each contributing something of its powers, to prepare for the moment when manhood ought to assume the whole dominion. Curiosity is still sufficiently awake, the memory is tenacious, and both are as yet undisturbed by the cares and perplexities which fill up so large a measure of our later years. This is the season for learning and discipline, indicated by the law of our nature, and it is quite certain that the indication cannot be neglected without great injury. If it were not to enter too nicely into the matter, it might be further remarked, that to this period there is an indulgence by common consent, which makes some things almost becoming and graceful, which at a later time would be deemed offensive or ridiculous. Every movement of an infant is said to be graceful. Its little limbs cannot be thrown into a position which strikes us as awkward or ugly. So it is with the time of life we are speaking of, considered with reference to wholesome intellectual movement. A little vanity may be indulged, some display—manifestations, though they be inordinate, of a sense of the importance of his pursuits, and of his own success in them, even a little of what is called pedantry. We know that they will be pruned off, and in the mean time the nourishment he receives is entering deeply into the intellectual and moral constitution, preparing it to present the harmonious and well proportioned combination which makes up the character of an educated man. In a riper age will such indulgence be allowed? A child that has taken its first lessons in dancing, may be excused if for a few days it forgets to walk but in the steps of the school, or to stand but in the positions it has been taught. What would be said of a full grown man who

should act so childish a part? He may learn to dance, but he must learn like a man, and not like a child; under restraints and difficulties from which a child would be free. And after all, will such education be complete or perfect? Will it, like that received at the proper season, be wrought into the system, so as to become a part of it, or will it be in a manner awkwardly set on, defective, not thoroughly incorporated, and betraying that it is the forced product of culture unseasonably late? Let it be remembered, that we are not now speaking of those rare men, in whom an all conquering natural vigor overcomes every difficulty, and carrying them to a lofty elevation, sustains them there in defiance of ordinary calculation. Still less, would we speak of such as having, from any cause whatever, been destitute of the means of early education, seize upon the first occasion that presents itself to supply the defect. They act wisely and well. They deserve to be cheered and encouraged and aided, and as they have nothing to reproach themselves with, (though, it must never be forgotten, they have much to regret,) they begin, with a clear and approving conscience, a work good in itself, and which the very effort proves they would have undertaken sooner if they could have done so. No: we speak not of such; we speak of the average class of mind, and of those who have the opportunity of being educated, but cast it away upon the miserable speculation that they will make up for lost time hereafter. To far the greater part—they may be assured of it—that hereafter will never come. Indolence and sensuality will grow with their growth. They will every day become more and more disqualified for the task, while the task itself will become heavier as their strength

decreases. To those (if any) to whom that hereafter may come, how will it come? Their companions, furnished and provided by the diligent prosecution of their studies, are already on their journey, and *they* must go back to try to pick up what they have left along the road behind them. What reasonable hope can they have of overtaking those who are already so far in advance? If more were necessary, upon a subject which seems itself to be so very plain as not to require either discussion or argument, there still remains a motive to be urged in addition, of sufficient power to determine the conduct of any one, who has a heart to feel, or an understanding to perceive the obligations of a duty as clear in its commands, as it ought to be delightful in its performance. Why attempt to explain or to enforce it? We have just witnessed a scene that will tell us what it is, with a vividness and force which no description can approach. In the midst of the assembled multitude brought together to witness the exercises of this day, your eye may perhaps have alighted upon one absorbed by deep and agitated feeling, and in spite of every exertion to assume composure, betraying the influence of uncontrollable emotion. *That* was a parent, come to enjoy the highest gratification a parent's heart can experience—to be repaid for years of anxious care, and for sacrifices which none but a parent could make, by seeing a beloved child come forth with honor and applause from his final trial here. Shall we reverse the picture? Shall we endeavor to describe the pang that would follow the annunciation that he was unworthy to participate in the exercises of the day, or to receive the public seal of approbation of his conduct? that he had yielded to the seductions of vice or

idleness, and satisfied himself with the miserable hope, that at some future time he would bind up the wounds his folly was inflicting upon the hearts of his parents and friends? No. Happily such extravagant perverseness is of very rare occurrence. We need not therefore dwell upon it. One single word more upon this part of the subject, and we must dismiss it with the brief and imperfect notice it has received, in order to proceed to other considerations which seem to deserve attention. In the distribution of the honors of the College, there are, as there ought to be, distinctions of degree, founded upon the aggregate result of attainment and conduct. How very nice they are, and upon what slight circumstances they may sometimes rest, is apparent from the fact that an absolute equality is often declared between two or three. Admitting, as we freely do, that such distinctions are proper in themselves, and the adjudication of them in general is correct and just; and admitting too, that very frequently they are found to be confirmed through life; yet neither in College nor in life are they to be considered as the conclusive evidence of comparative merit. If, for example, in a class to be graduated, there should be ten, who have been alike distinguished throughout their whole career, for exemplary deportment, for a faithful observance of the laws of the Institution, for a diligent prosecution of their studies, for all in short that it was in their power to do, shall we not say that they are entitled to equal praise? Assuredly, for all have done their duty to the whole measure of their abilities. Yet, it must be confessed, that there may be a difference among them in intellectual capacity, which though it cannot have the slightest weight in a moral judgment

of their respective claims, is nevertheless a proper ground of distinction in arranging the order in which they stand, estimated by what they have actually accomplished. Every student should aim at the highest distinction—every parent may be indulged in the hope that his child will gain it, and may be allowed to rejoice if he should be marked as the first in his class. But, if disappointed in this his highest hope, he can be truly assured of all the rest, great reason has he still to rejoice, and be thankful for such a child—strong ground for confidence in his future character. The root is there—the soil is proved to be good—and, with the blessing of God, he may count upon the increase, a steady and upright walk through life, with corresponding respectability and usefulness. If at such a moment, an undue pride should be suffered in the least to check the flow of devout gratitude, it must be because for that moment he forgets what a multitude of blessings have been granted. The last drop he would have desired may have been withheld; but his cup is full, and all that is in it is pure and sweet.

Upon this subject of the higher education, or what, at the expense of a frequent repetition of the same words, may be called a collegiate education, there are at all times erroneous notions afloat, to a greater or less extent, which undoubtedly have the effect of limiting and lessening its influence. So far as they prevail, they do great mischief. Sometimes, they prevent parents from giving this advantage to their children. There is no use, they will say, in sending youth to a College. Often, yielding to what they consider as a custom, to which they must conform, that they may not be entirely out of the fashion, they send their children—but send them with

doubts and indifference, as to the value of what they are to do, too plainly manifested to be misunderstood, and with the sanction of parental authority, sure to be imbibed and cherished by the youthful mind. This, at the least, enfeebles their efforts, and is very apt, besides, to bring them into conflict with the discipline and authorities of the College. How can they have any respect for either, if they are taught to believe that they are useless, or worse? It is not unlikely that these erroneous notions have still a further influence, not so distinctly marked, nor so easily detected, but of far more extensive operation, than either of those that have been mentioned. They teach the student who is going out of College, to undervalue what he has there acquired, and to suffer it to perish from neglect. That he thus entirely loses the benefit of education, is what no one will contend. On the contrary an effort will be presently made to show that he does not. But that he fails to derive from it all the advantage that he might, is thought to be so clear, that no one can deny it. This, however, is his own proper, personal loss, and nothing more. Great as it is, it is for his own consideration merely. But he has much more to answer for. He hurts the cause of education, by not holding up to view the whole advantages it is capable of conferring. He lowers the class of educated men to which he belongs, by failing to contribute what he can to raise it in the public estimation. He injures the character of his country, by suffering this class, which ought to be its pride and ornament, to sink below the level it is capable with adequate exertion of maintaining. Surely this is responsibility enough. Self love, benevolence, patriotism—the duty he owes to himself,

to others, to his country—all call upon him with a loud voice to preserve and increase what he has acquired.

Leaving this topic, for the present, let us devote a few minutes to the examination of one of the errors alluded to. Nothing that is very new or very striking can probably be said upon it to such an audience as is here assembled. But truth must be often repeated, however trite it may become by repetition. It seems to be a condition of our nature that what is good and valuable is to be maintained and preserved by incessant vigilance, while mischief is self-acting and works by its own vigor. It is indeed a law of wholesome moral discipline, to bring into exercise our better faculties, by requiring their continual exertion to assert and vindicate what is right and good. In such a work there is little room for the employment of ingenuity—less for the indulgence of fancy. Paradox may glitter in the ornaments of human contrivance. Error may be infinitely diversified, so as to have the charm of perpetual novelty. But truth is one. The road to it is one. It allows of no deviation, but must be approached straight forward, by sober investigation, and patient inquiry. One recommendation it has, beyond all doubt. In this straight road, no one who fairly followed it, was ever lost.

The error chiefly in view, is that which supposes the higher education, or collegiate education, to be useful and even necessary for those who are intended for what are denominated the learned professions, but not for those who expect to dedicate their lives to other occupations. If a parent mean that his son shall be a divine, or a lawyer, or a physician, he does right, according to this theory, in sending

him to College; but if he mean that he shall follow any other way of life, a College is not a suitable place for him. Thus stating the matter, it will be at once perceived where the danger lies, and what is the extent and magnitude of that danger, if such a notion as this could become generally prevalent. Of all the youth of a country, by far the greater part are debarred by uncontrollable circumstances from the privilege of extended moral and intellectual culture. The residue, consisting of the few who might enjoy this advantage, is to be again divided, and a portion of that few to be excluded—strange to say—by deliberate choice. It cannot be requisite, in exposing the fallacy of an opinion like this, to insist upon the obvious objection, that it assumes a basis which cannot be admitted, namely, that the occupation for life is to be determined before the time arrives for entering College. It would be unwise if it were practicable. But it is plainly impracticable. Who can tell what changes may happen before the period arrives for carrying such a decision into execution? Why then make it? Why adopt unchangeably a system for the future, when the future may not admit of its application? Surely no discreet parent—whatever his fond anticipations might suggest—would do any thing so absurd. He will postpone his decision, till the fit time for it shall arrive, and that fit time is not the period for entering College, but the period of leaving it. The faculties and dispositions are then more fully developed, the character better understood, the means of forming a judgment more distinct and ample. One consideration, indeed, ought upon this point to be entirely conclusive. The trials of the College, and their results, are themselves the very best

guides to a sound and wise decision. They test by actual experiment the qualities which are the proper elements of judgment in this delicate and important question. Sometimes it may happen that they disappoint expectation. Much oftener they disclose a power which was before unknown, and but for their searching efficacy, might have remained unknown, even to the possessor of it himself. If they had no other use than this; if the process of collegiate education had no other virtue, than to detect and bring out the latent fire which lies slumbering and unnoticed for want of excitement and collision, what parent who can duly estimate the value of such a hidden treasure, would hesitate to have it sought for, if there were but a chance that it might be found by searching. Nor is it necessary to urge another obvious consideration, namely, that the choice of a pursuit or occupation, made at the proper time, and actually carried into execution, is still not final. How many accidents, over which he has no control, may compel a man to change his pursuit in life? How many powerful motives may induce him to do so, when he is under no such compulsion. Instances of both are every day occurring, numerous enough to falsify a calculation founded upon the indissoluble union of man with the occupation he enters upon in the beginning of life.

Waving these considerations, however, weighty as they are, enough will still remain to show satisfactorily, nay, to show demonstratively, that this notion has no foundation whatever, and thence to lead us to the plain conclusion, that every parent who has it in his power, is bound in duty to give his child a collegiate education, unless he can give him a better. It is not intended to discuss at all the question

between public and private instruction. All that is to be insisted upon is, the advantage of as full a measure of thorough education, as can be given, without encroaching upon that portion of life, which in the order of nature ought to be applied to the performance of duty, rather than to preparation for it.

It may be, that in the distribution of the occupations of this world, with reference to their nature, some are regarded as intellectual, and others as not so; and it may be that it is thence concluded, that the culture of the intellect is necessary for the former, but not for the latter. Such a distribution cannot be admitted to be correct. But if it were, would the inference be a just one? Upon a fair estimate of the matter, it ought to be the very reverse. If the way of life to be followed, is such as to afford neither nourishment nor discipline to the intellect, then ought the provision of both to be the greater before it is entered upon, unless we mean to admit the extravagant suggestion, that the capacity which our Maker has in his wisdom given us, may, with impunity, be suffered to perish. A divine, or a lawyer, or a physician, is all his life long in a state of intellectual exercise;—his faculties are continually kept alive, and in healthy action, and his learning continually increasing;—this is what is said,—therefore it is proper that he should receive a full preparatory training—that he should be fully educated. One devoted to some other calling—we dare not be more specific—it would be deemed derogatory and disrespectful—such an one will never be invited or required by his occupation to make an effort of mind, nor furnished by it with the slightest particle of intellectual wealth. The stock that he begins

with, is all that he can ever expect to have. Therefore, it is better that he should begin with none at all. Absolute destitution is thus deliberately chosen. Such a conclusion is not warranted by sound logic, nor by sound wisdom. It is worse than this—it is immoral and sinful. It is no better than a voluntary sacrifice of the gifts of God, to some mean idol, whose ministers are the meanest appetites of man. That any parent should ever consent thus to devote a child, with a sense of what he is doing, it is impossible to believe. If he err, it must be simple error, the offspring of sheer ignorance.

But is there any reason in such a distribution, or, to speak with more exactness, is there any sense in the inference made from it? Is it true that education can or ought to be thus adapted to the occupation or profession intended to be pursued? There is no difficulty in understanding why a very large portion of mankind are excluded from the benefits of liberal education. It is from various causes placed beyond their reach. Of such we do not speak. We speak only of those who have it in their power; and as to them we would inquire whether there is any rational ground for asserting, that some ought to have more, and others less of the advantages of early discipline and culture. Whether, in other words, to the inevitable privation caused by uncontrollable circumstances, we are to add a conventional privation, arising out of the arrangements of society;—whether, to state it plainly and at once, in the shape of example, one who is to be a merchant, ought to be less educated, than one who is to be a lawyer;—whether the one ought to be sent to College, and continue to receive instruction 'till the age of eighteen or nineteen, and the other be taken from school, and put

to work, at thirteen or fourteen, simply because they are respectively designed for different pursuits?

The first mistake committed by those who would adopt this arbitrary and injurious distinction, is in supposing that a man's occupation or profession, being merely of a worldly nature, is the whole concern of his life; that it occupies all his time, and includes all his duties, and all his pleasures. Miserable would his condition be, if this were true. Miserably would he fulfil the purposes of his existence if it were even to approach the truth. But it is not true. For, whether he be a lawyer or a merchant, or a planter or a farmer, or a manufacturer, he is, notwithstanding, a *man*, with the high privileges and duties belonging to that character, which he ought to be able to enjoy and to fulfil. He is a social being, connected with those around him, by a thousand ties from which he cannot disengage himself, without doing violence to the better part of his nature. He cannot shut his eyes to distress, nor close his ear to its cry, nor withhold his hand from its relief. He cannot refuse to aid the ignorant, or to help the friendless. He is a son, a brother, a husband, a father, relations which employ and reward his affections, but call for the exercise of his virtues and his talents. He is a citizen of a free political community, and there, too, finds occasion to reflect, that there are other claims upon him, besides the claims that are made by his peculiar business. Nor must we forget that he is subject to infirmities; that calamity may overtake him; that death will come to him;—that he is exposed to temptations;—that he has an evil heart to be purified, and that he stands in need continually of the aid of an enlightened conscience. Surely it must be conceded

by every one who has bestowed a single thought upon our nature, that these points of identity are far more numerous, and far more important, than the accidental difference occasioned by profession or occupation. They entirely outweigh it. Duly estimated, they render it absolutely insignificant. Nay, there is scarcely one of them, that singly taken, is not of greater moment. Collectively, they make up the character, not of a lawyer, a physician, a merchant, a manufacturer, but of that which is common to them all, the character of a man—a social man, in a civilized and christian community. It is upon these points peculiarly, that education operates, where it produces its proper effect. It forms the man—its impress is upon the general character—its discipline for general usefulness and worth. To admit that any calling in life is of such a nature that it cannot be successfully followed by one who is wise and good, or that it will be more successfully followed by one who is weak and wicked, would be to sink it below the level of honest and worthy occupations. Such an admission supposes that it requires the individual who enters upon it to be in a degraded state as to morals and intellect. Who would be willing that such an opprobrium should be fastened upon the occupation he follows, and, as an unavoidable consequence, attach to himself, and go with his gains to his children? No one, assuredly. But some who would indignantly reject such an imputation, will hint, nevertheless, that a certain natural shrewdness and dexterity, unrestrained by too nice an observance of the dictates of a becoming pride, or the admonitions of a vigilant moral sense, are in some pursuits the best instruments of success. Be it so. For the sake of exposing a miserable fallacy, let it be

conceded that this is the shortest and surest way to succeed. What then? Is the nature of the thing altered—by the mode of stating it, or even by the assurance that the end is likely to be attained? What is thus described, is but the definition of knavery, however it may be disguised or softened in terms. Brought into plain English, it is neither more nor less than this, that a knave will do better than an honest man. What kind of work must it be, that requires such a workman? Will any one with the slightest sense of accountability, contend that it is lawful or honorable, or becoming? Will any one be hardy enough to assert, that an intelligent and accountable creature, ought to be counselled, or even permitted, to degrade and dishonor the faculties his Maker has given him, by such a prostitution of them, for any earthly purpose whatever? If education will preserve him from such debasement, it performs a noble office.

It will appear the more extraordinary that such a notion as we are now considering, should be entertained for a single moment, when we reflect, that it is now an universally established law of society, that men are not to be marked or known by their occupation or profession. According to a common but somewhat coarse adage, they must not smell of the shop. In their general intercourse with their fellow men, they must be able to present a character and qualifications so entirely independent of their peculiar pursuits in life, that what these are, shall not be known by any thing in their conduct, or conversation. Such a requirement may possibly be sometimes carried too far. But in the main, it is right, and founded in good sense and good breeding, which both demand that when we go out into society, we shall leave our

working dress and our private affairs at home, and carry with us what will be agreeable and profitable to others, as well as to ourselves. How shall we be able to comply with this law, if we have nothing to carry out with us? Shall we sit in a corner, stupid and vacant, contributing nothing to the innocent gratification or to the instruction or assistance of others, and receiving nothing from them in return? This is what no man could endure. Will he then retreat from the world entirely, shut himself up in his own shell, and devote himself exclusively to his own concerns? They will not occupy him. They are not sufficient for him. No young man can live safely in retired leisure, unless he has the capacity to read, to reflect, to study, to enjoy the exercise of his intellectual and moral faculties. How shall he have this, if it has never been cultivated, if he has been left unconscious of its very existence? But man is not born to be idle, nor to be alone. He must have exercise, and he will seek association. If he cannot enjoy what is good, he will betake himself to what is bad. He will connect himself with his fellow creatures, not by his strength, but by his weakness. They will be bound together, not by the exercise of their rational powers, but by the indulgence of their sensual and vicious propensities, corrupting and destroying, instead of enlightening and invigorating each other. These indulgences create and increase wants, whose importunate craving, unchecked by moral restraint, leads in so many instances to frightful crime. This is a catastrophe too hideous to be regarded with indifference or unconcern.

In the adoption of such a notion, there seems, besides, to be a striking contradiction and inconsistency. There is

scarcely a man engaged with any activity in business, of whatever kind, who does not promise himself a period to his labors, when he shall be able to retire from business, and enjoy repose and reflection. This is a natural feeling, and, if not absolutely universal, a very extensive one. A hasty view might incline us to believe that it is nothing but the desire of rest. One would fain hope, however, that it is something more—that there is a stirring in it of our better faculties—a prompting of the sense we have, that these faculties are capable of other and higher and more expanded exercise, and a sort of promise that their neglect and abuse shall be atoned for at some future time—a scheme, in short, for *living*; which, whether well or ill conceived, does certainly admit that a man is not living when he is entirely engrossed by his business. And this is undoubtedly the truth. The future, thus contemplated, if the matter be rightly considered, is present every day of our life. It is especially present in the earlier part of it. There are portions of every day which may be given to reflection, to reading, to preparation for the performance of our duties, and to the performance itself. No rational man need postpone to the end of his life, that calm which all promise themselves; he may have it each day if he will; he may have it, if he choose to understand aright the gracious appointment of the Author of our being, in a still higher degree, at the end of each week, when he is not only permitted, but enjoined to withdraw one-seventh of his time from the cares and occupations of life, and to dedicate it to meditations which refresh his weary nature, which purify and refine it from earthly corruptions, and while they exalt, invigorate it for whatever tasks it has to perform. There

are those who persuade themselves, that their business demands of them all their time, and that even the Sabbath cannot be spared for its appropriate employment. Let such an one deal fairly with himself. Let him take as strict an account of his time as he does of his money, for a week or a month, allowing six days to the week, summing up at the end all the fragments that have been wasted in listless idleness,—that have been worse than wasted in hurtful indulgence, or have been involuntarily sacrificed to some of the thousand contrivances, invented for killing time,—and then say whether he had not a moment to spare for moral and intellectual improvement, for cultivating relations of good will and kindness, and for fulfilling the duties of a social man, in all their various forms. The best excuse he can offer, if he should find a large balance against him, will be, that he has not been educated—that his taste has not been cultivated—that his capacity has not been developed, and disciplined; in a word, that he is unable;—that while yet a child, he was plunged, unformed and uninstructed, or imperfectly instructed, into the turbulent current of business, and he is fit for no other element. Why was he not educated, is the natural inquiry? If he be less than he might have been, as the confession seems to imply, there is a grave responsibility somewhere. Let all who have the care of the conduct of youth, look to it.—But for encroaching upon the appointed day of rest—putting aside all serious considerations—there is no excuse at all. It is not an evidence of industry in one's avocations, but the contrary. It is not profitable, even upon a mere worldly estimate, but injurious. It is commonly the refuge of laziness and disorderly habits, which,

neglecting things when they ought to be done, suffer them to accumulate, with the expectation that the arrears will be cleared off on Sunday. A man who yields to this temptation, does not labor seven days—he allows himself seven days to do the work of six, and after all, the work is not done. The thief procrastination will be sure to steal more than one day out of the six, and leave to the seventh an undue proportion of work, even though its own proper duty be at the same time left entirely unperformed. What was said by Sir Matthew Hale in 1662, doubtless he would have been able to repeat in 1833. “I have found by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duty of this day hath ever had joined to it, a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me.” But apart from the considerations which governed that pious man, and deserve the deep attention of every one; no one who seriously reflects, will fail to be convinced, however paradoxical it may appear, that more work can be done in six days, than in seven. The fact is believed to support the argument. Speaking as a witness, after some experience, and careful observation, I can say, that many of the most industrious, and, in their respective walks, the most eminent men I have known, have been those who refrained from worldly employment on the Sabbath. But to return to the point under discussion—how do those who promise themselves a period of rest and of rational enjoyment, after the fatigues of a long day of uninterrupted labor, propose to spend it, if in the course of Providence it should be mercifully granted to them? I will not attempt to answer the question, but leave it for those to reflect upon, whose

experience and studies have enabled them to decide, what the chances are, that the buds, and the blossoms, and fruit, which in the order of nature are the ornament and delight of the season of genial warmth, will come forth in the frosts of winter.

An opinion has already been intimated that the benefits of early education, continued through the period which nature indicates as the time for training and discipline, are not entirely lost, even though the acquirements in College should afterwards be neglected. Wholesome nourishment and exercise for the mind, are like wholesome nourishment and exercise for the body. They enter into the constitution, and impart to it general health and strength, and capacity for the exertions it may be called upon to make, and the trials it may be doomed to suffer. This is especially true of childhood and youth, and as to all that concerns our physical condition, is universally admitted, in practice, as well as in theory. The tender infant is not suffered to lie in torpid inaction. Its little frame is put in motion in its mother's arms. As soon as it can bear exposure, it is sent forth to larger exercise in the open air. The boy is permitted and encouraged to rejoice in active and invigorating sports; and the youth, quite up to the season of manhood, is taught to blend the healthful exertion of his sinews and muscles, with the cultivation of his intellectual and moral powers. Why is this indication of nature, thus carefully observed and obeyed? Why do parents watch with so much anxious care over the forming constitution of the body, and seek to train it to grace and vigor? It is because it *is forming*, and the fashion it then receives may more or less abide by it ever after. Their anxious care is well bestowed. Much of the happiness of

life depends upon it, and every one is aware that such is the case. Hence it is that gymnastics have been introduced into places of instruction, where feats are performed which no man of full age expects ever to repeat, unless it should be his lot to be a tumbler or a rope dancer. Is there not a precise analogy, in this respect, between the two parts of our nature? Have not the moral and intellectual faculties a growth, a period of expansion, a season for nourishment and direction, when the constitution of the mind and heart is taking a form like that of the body, and when the intellectual and moral capacities are to be assisted and trained into a healthy condition? Are there no gymnastics of the mind? It would be deemed a palpable absurdity if any one were to argue, that a child was likely to be employed in sedentary occupations, and therefore it was not material that he should have the use of his limbs. Is it not still more absurd to use such an argument in relation to his higher and better faculties? It is a great calamity to be deprived of sight—to be unable to behold the glories of the visible creation, and enjoy the beauties of art. Is it a less one, to be destitute of intellectual vision, by which we are enabled to “look through nature up to nature’s God,” and to discern glories greater far than those, great as we must confess them to be, which are manifested to the eye of the body? By which, too, we are enabled to look into ourselves, and there to see the fearful and wonderful thing we are, and how it is that from the source of infinite wisdom and goodness, there is an emanation of light imparted to us, which we are commanded not to allow “to be darkened.” Surely, surely, these are reflections which ought for ever to silence the sordid calculation that

would bend man's whole powers down to the earth, instead of helping him to grow up towards the heavens. The superincumbent weight of the world's business will press heavily enough upon him. With all the preparation he can have, and all the improvement he can make of it, there is danger that he will but seldom be able to raise himself above the thick fog, that creeps along the ground, and limits his view to the objects immediately around him, into the clear region where higher duties and higher enjoyments offer themselves to his attention—where the spirit may breathe, the mind hold communion with intelligence, the affections kindle, the charities be nursed, and his whole nature exalted, under the quickening influence of the consciousness that he is a man. It is in this consciousness, properly enlightened, that dwells his real dignity, and in it, too, the sense of all his duties. What parent, then, who has the ability, will withhold from his child, the means of such instruction and discipline, in their fullest measure, as may promise to give him a moral and intellectual constitution fitted to seize upon, and improve the occasions that may arise for purifying and exalting his nature, and fulfilling all his obligations? In this consists his highest happiness. It will not control the course of events. It will not make adverse fortune prosperous, nor the contrary. But, like a wall in the sea, well planted and well supported, broad in its foundation, and carried to its proper height, it will establish a secure and quiet retreat from the shocks, both of prosperity and adversity, to which he may betake himself in the hour of dangerous trial, and escape the imminent hazard of being overwhelmed by either.

But in thus earnestly contending that every parent is

bound to give to his child the fullest measure of education in his power, and that what is wrought into the constitution in youth may, and probably will, have a good effect in after life, let no one suppose that we would countenance for a moment the belief, that there is nothing more to be done. The responsibility is shifted—it does not cease. When parents and guardians and teachers have done all that they can do, the rest remains for him who has had the benefit of their watchful care. It is for him to preserve, and to improve what he has been enabled to acquire. And, let it be added, every one has it in his power to do so. But he must lose no time about beginning. A portion of every day should be thus applied, and the first portion, if possible, be taken from the day that follows his leaving College. If that be not practicable to the very letter, at least, no time should be unnecessarily lost. The accumulation from the savings of money, is a thing very well understood. Every one knows, that a small sum steadily set apart from day to day, or from year to year, through a long life, will, with its regular increase, make up in the end, a very large aggregate. This sort of economy is sufficiently inculcated, and to encourage it, we are told, that there is scarcely an income so small as not to allow of its observance. In the management of our faculties, for preserving and enlarging our stock of good knowledge, there is at least an equal certainty that method and industry, with perseverance, will be attended with success. Each day's work in itself, is small; but if every day's work be done, it is astonishing how much may be gathered together, by the application only of the time that is commonly wasted in absolute listlessness. None know it better

than those who have been careless spendthrifts, squandering the moments that might have been profitably employed, until at last they find themselves ignorant and destitute, with the cutting self-reproach of having a less stock of useful acquirements than they carried with them from College.

Too much of your time has been already occupied to permit a discussion of this important topic, at the length it deserves. It is not practicable, without most unreasonably taxing your patience, to dwell upon the arguments which naturally suggest themselves. One view there is, that cannot be wholly omitted, and in its behalf, however feebly, imperfectly, and hastily, it may at this late hour be stated. One moment more is asked.

The body of educated men in a country, besides their other distinctions (all attended with corresponding duties) are the natural guardians of the cause of education. They are expected to be able to perform the office of guardians. To them, chiefly, this great cause must look for support, in all its extent and variety, from the highest to the lowest. Professors and teachers, learned and able as they may be, are still regarded as interested persons, and listened to with doubt and distrust. They must be upheld by testimony, entitled to respect as disinterested and competent—the testimony of men known to be able to appreciate their labors and their services, and to judge of their fitness and their qualifications. Hence it is, that every considerable institution is finally under the control of a board of trustees, in some way selected from the mass of the community, to superintend its interests, to watch over its conduct, and by actual inspection to observe the working of the system as well as

the capacity and fidelity of all who are entrusted with its details. Who will be able to perform this duty but such as having had the advantage of early education have improved it by continual culture? Who else can be competent to judge of the examination of classes, of the merits of professors and teachers? In whom else can there be confidence that the great interests of education, are safe under their charge? And *they*, too, are to be judged; they are amenable to public opinion, which is at last to decide upon them, who decide upon every thing else. But how shall the tribunal be constituted which is to pass upon their doings? How shall public opinion be enlightened, so that from their judges they may look for justice, unless there be a body of educated men, who feel a lively sympathy in their labors because they know their value, and who are able by their influence to inform and direct the public mind?

To this same body of educated men, it belongs to judge of proposed improvements, to weigh them carefully, to examine them thoroughly, and to sanction and adopt them only when after a rigorous investigation they appear to be clearly good. New schemes are constantly offering themselves, claiming to be superior to the ancient methods. Sometimes, they profess to make the way of learning easy and quite an amusement; forgetting that one great point in education is to prepare us by discipline for a life of exertion and toil. At others, they would exclude the ancient languages, and instead of the fine models they exhibit in the productions of the masters who used them, satisfy us with translations, when every one who can study them in the original is aware, that even if the substance can be retained, (which is more than doubtful) the

graces and beauties which constitute their main charm, are unavoidably lost in the transfer. Then there are those who, under the plea of utility, would crowd into the work of education many things which may be admitted to be well in their place, and fit enough to be learned at the proper time, but have nothing to do with our general nature, nor with the cultivation of our general powers. And so of a thousand other plans, to which there is not time even to make an allusion. But of all the blows that can be levelled at this good cause, there is none so deadly and destructive, as that which aims to sever or to weaken the union of learning and Religion. Our fathers thought them inseparable. When they were to build up an edifice for instruction, they laid its foundation in piety, and they humbly invoked the Divine aid to fill the whole structure with the light of truth. Nor did they neglect the appointed means. Within its walls they fixed an altar, not like that in Athens, inscribed to "the Unknown God," but to Him, who having always manifested Himself in the works of creation and Providence, has also made Himself known by the revelation of His attributes, and of His holy will. Around this altar they thought it right to assemble daily the youth committed to their care, and to endeavor to provide that its fire should be fed, and its services be performed, by pious and learned men:—that so the perfume of its offerings might fill the atmosphere of the nursery of youth—all human learning be accomplished with the spirit of devotion, and the recollection of our dependence, and our duties be continually present with the effort to improve the faculties of the mind. Such an institution was to be an Alma Mater. It was to

fulfil a mother's duty, not only with a mother's affection, but with the deep religious sense that is seated in a pious mother's heart, to guide and govern that affection, so beautifully exhibited, in the first lessons of childhood, when the little hands are upraised towards heaven, by the mother's side, before the tongue has power to give utterance to praise or thanksgiving. But now, there are those who would separate religion from learning, who would exclude the altar from the nursery of youth, and leave the place of instruction without any visible manifestation or acknowledgement of duty to our Maker. If such a proposal were limited to scoffers at religion, to such as indulge in sneers and sarcasms at all that is serious, to men who vainly imagine they make themselves giants, by raising their puny hand against heaven—it would not be surprising, and, comparatively, it would be harmless. *They* are few in number, and of little weight. The real matter of astonishment, not unmixed with deep concern, is, that it should find favor with any one else. That it can be entertained for a moment must be owing to ignorance or thoughtlessness. Here, then, the body of educated men must take their stand. By all the means in their power they must endeavor to avert the pestilent mischief of desecrating the places of instruction, of separating the culture of the heart from that of the mind; and, under the pretence of a liberal morality, of rejecting the only morality that is clear in its source, pure in its precepts, and efficacious in its influences—the morality of the Gospel. All else, at last, is but idolatry—the worship of something of man's own creation, and that thing imperfect and feeble like himself, and wholly insufficient to give him support and strength.

Brethren of the Alumni Association—these are but hints upon some of the important topics which an occasion like the present suggests. To you, who have had the advantages of a liberal education, it belongs, to take care that as far as depends upon man's ability, these advantages shall continue to be held in esteem, and be preserved unimpaired. We come to revisit our Alma Mater, not to take shelter again under wings, where we were once protected and nourished, but with filial duty, and what strength we have, to endeavor to uphold and extend her beneficent efforts in the cause of religion and learning. To her sons she looks to be her witnesses, and her champions—by their lives to show forth the fruits of her nurture, and with their manly powers, here trained into vigor, to maintain and defend that good cause at every point where it may seem to be in danger.

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